

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 015082

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 015082

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT USUN 0132 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BEIRUT

TEL AVIV CAIRO 16 JAN

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0132

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, AORG, LE, XF, US, UR

SUBJ: US UNTSO OBSERVERS IN LEBANON

REF: STATE 004463, BEIRUT 412 AND 468

1. WE HAVE RAISED MATTER OF REMOVAL OF US OFFICERS FROM ILMAC TWICE WITH SECRETARIAT, FIRST TO CLARIFY UN POSITION, AND SECOND, AFTER RECEIVING BEIRUT'S REPORT THAT LEBANESE WELCOMED CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US OBSERVERS, TO ASK UN TO RECONSIDER ITS DECISION. WE WILL BE FOLLOWING UP WITH ASYG URQUHART WHEN HE RETURNS FROM MIDDLE EAST AND, IN MEANTIME, WITH OFFICIALS CLOSE TO SYG.

2. SPEAKING TO AMB BENNETT BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR MIDDLE
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PAGE 02 STATE 015082

EAST, URQUHART DID NOT INDICATE ANY UN DESIRE REMOVE US OFFICERS FROM ILMAC. ON CONTRARY URQUHART EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION AND US PERFORMANCE IN UNTSO GENERALLY; HE WENT ON TO SAY HE WOULD WELCOME US OBSERVERS ANYWHERE

AND WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO SEE THEM IN SYRIA. HE DID COMMENT ON AWKWARDNESS OF SOVIET UNACCEPTABILITY IN CERTAIN AREAS BUT WENT ON TO PUT MUCH MORE ATTENTION ON UN DESIRE TO ACHIEVE RELAXATION OF ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO CONTACT WITH UNEF FORCES OF ANY COUNTRY NOT HAVING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HE STRESSED PROBLEMS THIS ATTITUDE MADE FOR COORDINATED UNEF OPERATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, URQUHART SAID SOVIETS HAD MADE NO PITCH FOR RUSSIAN OBSERVERS TO BE ASSIGNED TO LEBANON.

3. ON JANUARY 16 WE CALLED ON URQUHART'S DEPUTY, F.T. LIU, TO EXPRESS SURPRISE AND DISAPPOINTMENT THAT UN APPARENTLY INTENDED TO PHASE OUT US ILMAC OBSERVERS DESPITE LEBANESE DESIRE THAT THEY REMAIN AND UN'S OWN SATISFACTION OVER CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION, AS INDICATED TO AMB. BENNETT. WE ASKED THAT UN RECONSIDER DECISION.

4. LIU ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TWO US OFFICERS WERE BEING PHASED OUT OF ILMAC, AND GAVE UN'S REASONS. HE SAID UN BELIEVED THERE SHOULD BE REASONABLE BALANCE BETWEEN ASSIGNMENTS OF US AND USSR UNTSO OBSERVERS, AND ANTICIPATED SOVIET OBJECTIONS IF THERE WERE NOT. US NOW HAD OBSERVERS IN EGYPT AND SYRIA, AS WELL AS ISRAEL, AND AT HEADQUARTERS CONTINUED TO HOLD KEY OPERATIONS OFFICER POST. USSR HAD NO COMPARABLE FUNCTIONAL POSITION, WAS EXCLUDED FROM ISRAEL, AND WOULD NOT BE WELCOME IN LEBANON. UN FELT SOVIETS WOULD COMPLAIN ONCE THEY WOKE UP TO INEQUITIES OF SITUATION, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ON FIRM GROUND. IT WAS TO FORESTALL THIS THAT US OFFICERS IN LEBANON WERE BEING REPLACED AS THEIR TOURS ENDED WITH OTHER NATIONALS.

5. LIU SAID THAT WHILE LEBANESE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THEY PREFERRED NOT TO HAVE SOVIETS, THEY HAD NEVER IMPLIED THEY WISHED US OFFICERS TO GO. IDEA FOR PHASING OUT AMERICANS WAS UN'S ALONE, AND HE REGRETTED ANY MISUNDERSTANDING ON THIS POINT.

6. LIU PROMISED TO REPORT OUR REQUEST THAT DECISION BE RECONSIDERED, AND IT WAS LEFT THAT SUBJECT WOULD BE DISCUSSED
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PAGE 03 STATE 015082

AGAIN ON URQUHART'S RETURN NEXT WEEK.

7. UNLESS DEPARTMENT HAS OTHER INSTRUCTIONS, WE PROPOSE TO RAISE MATTER ONCE MORE FOR THE RECORD, BUT NOT PERSIST IF UN CONTINUES TO WISH PHASE OUT AMERICANS. WE THINK UN HAS TAKEN OUR POINT THAT THERE NEED NOT BE EXACT BALANCE BETWEEN US AND SOVIET OBSERVERS' FUNCTIONS AND GEOGRAPHIC ASSIGNMENTS AND THAT, IN US VIEW, UN IS BEING UNDULY SENSITIVE TO ANTICIPATED SOVIET PRESSURE. AT SAME TIME DECISION IS IN LAST ANALYSIS UN'S AND THEY ARE RIGHT THAT US HAS BEST OF BARGAIN IN UNTSO ASSIGNMENTS.

SCALI UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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